

Forgiveness of Enemies,
AND *N^o 19*
Praying for their Forgiveness:

RECOMMENDED IN A ✓

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
Parochial Abbey-Church

O F
T E W K E S B U R Y,
I N
G L O C E S T E R - S H I R E,

On *February* the 17th, 170⁵/₆.

By *JOHN MATTHEWS*, M. A. and
Pastor of the said Church and Parish.

O X F O R D: K

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Prayers for their Forgiveness

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Parish of Abbey-Church

THE WEEKS

GALE



On the 17th 1700

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Printed by L. A. L. 1700

A N
ADVERTISEMENT
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THE Publication of this Sermon was upon this Occasion: Some few disaffected Persons of my Parish clandestinely form'd, and vigorously prosecuted a Design of Ejecting me out of my Living. To which purpose they encouraged and supported my late Curate (who was very obsequious and manageable in their Hands) to petition for a Grant of the Place, as actually void, on a surmized Defect of my Grant.

This Application occasioned a Summons to me from the Right Honourable the Lord KEEPER, and an Appearance before him

TO the R E A D E R.

on the 28th of January last. In which his Lordship shewed favourable and generous Respect to me, and Prudence and Integrity answerable to his Station. And dismissed me and my Friends with Satisfaction, and the Agent there present against me (as We thought) with little Encouragement of effecting his Design.

But Malice is restless and unwearied. The disappointed Gentleman takes new Measures; dispatches a Letter to his Correspondents of our Town, to gather up all the invidious Accusations against me, which they could rake together. In which my late Curate was a very ungrateful Complice, and too soon forgot those small Obligations I had laid upon him.

To be brief, They fram'd up a whole Decad of frivolous Depositions, without one entire Monad of Truth. They went back many Years upon the cold Scent of superannuated Resentments. By which (I fear) They have more wounded their own Consciences, than my Reputation, or Interest. For Some of them are a perfect Inversion of the Truth, and State of the Case: and Other (admitting them

To the R E A D E R.

them to be true) are of small Moment. They have really done me great Honour, in representing me so little Peccant and Criminal in the Ministry of Nineteen Years.

Upon the first LORD'S-Day after my Return, I preached this following Discourse, to which I have made some proper Additions, without Omission of any one Sentence, then deliver'd, to the best of my Knowledge. And I commit it to the publick View in Vindication of my self. For some (I hear) give out, That I compared my self to our Blessed Saviour, whose Imitation I only urge; That it contained Blaphemy; That I swagger'd in the Pulpit, at a strange extravagant rate: Which, by my Adversaries Misrepresentation, made some Impression upon the Mind of my Reverend Diocesan; and probably upon Others of eminent Quality.

In my Sermon I have observ'd this Temper: To represent the Case, and make my Enemies sensible of the Injustice and Uncharitableness of their Attempts: and to shew, How ready I would be to Forgive them, and to pray for their Forgiveness: and suggest to them,

To the R E A D E R.

them, More to consult the real Good and Edification of this populous Place. And I hope the Design was honest and pious, and the Management of it temperate and dispassionate: and considering the Straitness of Time, and Agitation of Thoughts I was then under, the Performance may be tolerable and useful.

†

A SER.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

Luke XXIII.†34.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.---

THES E are the Words of our Blessed Saviour at the time of his Crucifixion, under the Contempt, Ignominy and Torture, which attended it, and the various Circumstances of aggravating and unknown Sorrows; spoken from the *Venerable Chair* of his Cross. And it was a stupendious Act of divine Piety, for a Soul so embarras'd and provok'd, so calmly and serenely and compassi-

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passionately to pray for such Sinners ! It is a Speech full of divine and most imitable Charity, and (as it should seem by St. *Luke's* Relation) one of the first of those seven oracular Sentences, which our Lord from thence utter'd, in the Extremity of his Humiliation and Sufferings.

Which Words I have selected for the present Standard of my intended Discourse : and shall cast the Substance of the following Meditations,

I. Into some doctrinal Propositions, or Observations.

II. Into some practical Uses.

I. The First doctrinal Proposition is, That *Forgiveness of Enemies* is a Duty taught by the Precepts, Life and Death of our Blessed Saviour. Your Memories will easily recollect many Gospel Precepts to this purpose ;
Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you : And our Lord thus concludes the Parable of the unmerciful and unforgiving Fellow-servant, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts*

Matt.
5. 44.

Matt.
18. 35.

hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.

And to St. Peter, who ask'd him, *How often shall my Brother offend against me, and I forgive him; until seven times?* Jesus said Matt. 18. 22.
unto him, *I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.* So un-

restrain'd and reiterated should our Forgiveness of our offending Brethren be! Especially if the Condition express'd by our Lord interpose; *Take heed to your selves: If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent: thou shalt forgive him.* Luke 17. 3, 4.

These are express Precepts of our Lord for the Forgiveness of Enemies; but we cannot but be sensible, How distant the Practice of most Christians is! Who esteem Revenge a greater Glory than Forgiveness: and the *latent Memorials of Displeasure* revive upon Occasion in seemingly mortified Souls.

In his most innocent and holy Life, How freely and frequently did our Lord forgive his Enemies; even Those, who persecuted and hated him! When the *Samaritans* re-

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fused

refused to receive him, and Two of his Disci-
 ples warmly resenting the Affront, talk'd of
 Fire from Heaven to chastise it; he sharply
 rebuk'd them and said, *Ye know not what*
 Luke 9. *manner of Spirit ye are of, for the Son of man*
 55, 56. *came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*
 He instantly healed the Wound of the High-
 Priest's Servant, who came to seize him. He
 wept over *Jerusalem*, though full of Impiety
 against God, and contemptuous Usage to him-
 self. And St. Peter thus represents him, *When*
 1 Pet. *he was reviled, he reviled not again: when*
 2. 23. *he suffered, he threatned not; but committed*
himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Beside in his State of Humiliation he actu-
 ally gave, and graciously pronounc'd For-
 giveness of Sins to many; which carries the
 sweetest Accent of Mercy and Refreshment
 to guilty Souls. Which is sufficient to shew,
 That Forgiveness of Enemies was graciously
 exemplified in the Life of our Blessed Lord.

And St. Paul affirms, *That while we were*
Enemies, Christ died for us. And these Words
 of our Saviour, under the Indignities and
 Torments of his Crucifixion, *Father forgive*
them; for they know not what they do, are
 a convincing Evidence, That Forgiveness of
 Ene-

Enemies was pathetically recommended to Christians in the Death of the Blessed *Jesus*.

On which Speech of our Lord, *Grotius* thus remarks, 'What Christ admonished by Precept, that *we should pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us*, that he performs by his own Act: Declaring himself to be truly our High-Priest, whose Office it is to offer *Sacrifice for the ignorances of the People*. And hereby that of *Isaiah* was fulfill'd, *He made intercession for the transgressors*.

Isaiah
53. 12.

The 2^d doctrinal Proposition is, That Enemies, who malign and persecute the Innocent, through Error and unaffected Ignorance, are pitiable and pardonable. This might be the Case of the vulgar, illiterate *Jews*, tho' not of their Rulers and *Pharisees*, who acted with Prejudice and Obstinacy against Christ. This was King *Abimelech's* Plea to God, when he had some Design on the Chastity of *Sarah*, *Abraham's* Wife, whom he suppos'd to have been his Sister, *In the integrity of my heart, and the innocency of my hands, have I done this*. And the Lord approv'd and justified his Plea.

Gen. 20
5, 6.

And the Scripture seems to absolve those Persons from the Guilt of Treason, who in

^{2 Sam.}
^{15. 11.} the unnatural Rebellion of *Abſalom*, went in
their ſimplicity, and they knew not any thing.

Malice of the Will makes the Treason, of which they were clear and untainted, intending it probably as a becoming Honour to the King's Son. And it was barbarous Cruelty in King *Saul* to ſlay *Abimelech*, and many other Priests and Innocents, when he had thus pleaded in his juſt Defence; *Did I then begin to enquire of God for David? be it far from me. Let not the King impute any thing to his Servant, nor to all the houſe of my Father: for thy Servant knew nothing of this, leſſor more.*

^{1 Sam.}
^{22. 15.}

This juſt Apology of the innocent and undeſigning Priest did not prevail with the incenſed King, but he made a bloody inhuman Sacrifice of a numerous Family of innocent Priests.

That paſſage alſo of St. *Paul* is very worthy our Conſideration, *I thank Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry: Who was before a Blaſphemer, and a Perſecutor, and Injurious. But I obtained mercy, becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

^{1 Tim. I.}
^{12, 13.}

By which we plainly ſee, that unaffected Ignorance finds a Sanctuary in the divine Mercy; as the Ignorance of the *Jews* (though too culpable

pable and affected in their Rulers) did in Christ's Intercession. According to that of *Philo*, Τὸ ἀγνοῖα παρὰ τὴν ἐκείνου συννώμεν δίδωται, To him, who transgresseth through Ignorance, Pity and Pardon should be extended.

Some of the *Jews* were unwarily prejudic'd against our Suffering Lord, and might think him a guilty Person, an Impostor, and an Enemy to their Religion and Country. Others might maliciously prosecute him, and rejoice at his Death. None of his Enemies did apprehend the Sanctity and Divinity of his Person, nor the saving Design of his Death, nor the Greatness of their Guilt, and future Vengeance: and upon these Considerations our Saviour might breath out this compassionate Intercession; *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* They did not sin to the utmost Extent of Maliginity, who sinned against Him, whom they did not sufficiently know; *For had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

3. A Third doctrinal Proposition is, That in the Commencement of unjust Designs, and the malicious Prosecution of innocent Persons Men know not what they do. They cannot fore-

foresee what the Attempt may betray them to; what Guilt they may contract, what Frauds, Unrighteousness, and Perjuries they may engage in, what Precipices of Sin they may run upon, before they can accomplish their Ends: and what ill and fatal Consequences may succeed the Accomplishment.

Ahab would never have coveted *Naboth's* Vineyard, nor *Jezebel* have contriv'd his Destruction, if they had foreseen, what Guilt must transfer the Possession, and what a Series of Judgments would fall on themselves and Posterity. When Men engulf themselves in wicked and unrighteous Designs, they know not what they are going about, and that Guilt may multiply upon Guilt, as one Wave upon the back of another. When Any determin and resolve on any wicked and desperate Proceedings, they know not where it will lead them; nor where to stop, nor what Accumulation of Sin may be in the Pursuit.

For they must confirm one false Step, one illegal Proceeding with another, and do some things with a *trembling* Hand, and *reluctant* Heart. And a rash Regard to imaginary Honour may make a vile Prostitute of Conscience, and *they may go on too far to start back.*

Seneca

Seneca hath said very well, *Stulta res est nequitiae modus*; It is a foolish thing to imagin, Hitherto we will proceed in Wickedness, and no farther. Have not Murders followed Adulteries, and Perjuries Covetousness, and Treachery Ambition? And hath not one sinful Engagement involv'd the Soul in multiply'd Guilt? They know not what they do, and how often and mortally they may wound their Consciences, who wound it voluntarily in one unjust Attempt. Some have been confounded at the *Prevarications, Execrations, and Perjuries* they have been guilty of in the Course of one wicked Design, which should be a Caution to All.

The People were for degrading *Samuel*; but what said the Lord? *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* Men may form unjust Designs against the Servants of GOD, and maliciously prosecute and oppress them: but they know not how much they may offend GOD, wound their Consciences, and bring Scandal on Religion: how deeply they may immerse themselves in Guilt and Impiety, and see miserable Shipwrecks of their Conscience and Honesty.

As

Acts 9.
4, 5,

As they knew not what they did, who persecuted Christ in his *Person*, so they know not what they do, who persecute Him in his *Members*; as he once rebuked persecuting *Saul*.

For Instance, Suppose a Minister of the Gospel, placed over a particular Charge, by a special Providence; and so far from his seeking at first, that he *awfully* declin'd it: and that some few disaffected Persons form a Design of Depriving such a Minister, and causelessly Ejecting him after many Years Service: They know not how much they may sin against GOD; against the many Precepts of the *Gospel*, which require Love, Obedience, and Honour to those, *who are placed over them, and admonish them; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake*: and how much they may sin against their own and others Souls.

They know not how much Falshood, Defamation, Uncharitableness, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, how many Degrees of Malice they may go through, before they accomplish their Design; and how little they may be Gainers after their invidious Success. It is unknown to them, how far they may promote

promote Atheism, and Infidelity, Divisions and Animosities; and what Dis-service they may do to Religion by such unchristian Projects. And if they will be so hardened in Iniquity, as not to regard these things, our *Superiours in Church and State* should controul them.

They know not what they do, who (as an ingenious Gentleman did apply the Speech) *resolve to draw the Sword, and throw away the Scabbard*; to pass over the *Rubicon*, though a Prospect of Mischief and Confusion be before them: and proclaim an irreconcilable *War* against the Ministers of the Gospel of *Peace*. If Men did believe Us to be the *Proxies* and *Embassadors* of Christ; and that the Charge of Souls were committed to Us by the Holy Ghost, it would seem a presumptuous Attempt in any private Persons to depose and injure Us; *lest they should be found even to fight against God.*

Acts
5. 39.

What Guilt had it been in the *Jews*, if they had killed the Prophet *Jeremiah*, as they at divers times attempted! He told them that *he was in their hands*; but that *they would bring the Guilt of his innocent blood upon themselves.* St. Cyprian affirms of *Cornelius*, that he was made *Bishop de Dei*

Jer. 26.
15.

Epist. 55.

& Christi ejus judicio, by the Election and Approbation of God and his Christ: and if it be so with any *inferiour* Pastor, they know not how far they may be accountable, nor what they do, who to all their other Malignity, Opposition and Injuriousness, complot and contrive his *Degradation* and *Depredation*.

4. A fourth Doctrinal Proposition is, That they who of set Malice, out of deliberate and premeditate Injustice, pursue the Innocent, are scarce intituled to the Benefit of Christ's Intercession. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* But they, who enter into unrighteous Designs with deep Consultation, with Association and Application to Others; and those who know little of the Case, but by *partial Information*; and know in their Conscience, in the mean time, that what they act, is against the Laws of Charity, Justice, and spiritual Relation; they cannot well plead unaffected Ignorance, but rather may be judged to offend of malicious Wickedness, and wilful Violence to Conscience.

Some Crimes, by the Law of our Nation, are denied the *Benefit* of the *Clergy*: and

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GOD restrain us all from Engagement in those Sins, to which we may not properly apply this Intercession of our LORD, *Father, forgive Us; for We know not what We do!* When we engage wilfully, deliberately, and confederately in unrighteous Actions, we proceed too far (though there be no Restraint on Infinite Mercy) and exclude our selves from the Benefit of this gracious Intercession.

For Sins of Youth, Inconsideration, Ignorance, and Infirmary, &c. we may address our selves to GOD in the Language of our dear Redeemer, and successfully use this ghostly Ejaculation, and find a favourable Intercessor. But if Men will sin against the Light and Dictates of Conscience, and deliberately proceed against the Commands of GOD, and Laws of Religion, and join Hand in Hand to do unrighteously, and cabal to do Mischief; they know too much what they do, and may (without the infinite Mercies of GOD) render themselves more incapable of *Forgiveness*, and hardly be included in the *Comprehension* of our Saviour's Intercession.

Acts
7. 60.

When St. Stephen was stoned, his Speech of Intercession was, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge.* They, who stoned him, did it out of ignorant and blind Zeal, and might think they *did God good Service.* But when Sinners know the Injustice and Guiltiness of their Actions, and yet will drudge on in their subterraneous Vaults, and *mine* and *countermine* to overthrow the Righteous, and destroy the Innocent; Can such plead Ignorance, Surprise or Infirmary? *Let none imagin evil against his Brother in his heart,* is an excellent Sanction of Religion: but they, who are industriously active to imagin and compass Evil against their Neighbours; against their Ministers, who instruct them better; cannot well plead Ignorance or Excuse.

Zech.
7. 10.

In some Sense they know not what they do, who commit any Sin: The Philosopher saith truly, *Omnis malus ignorans, Every evil Man hath a blind-side of Ignorance;* especially those who do Wickedness with repeated Consultation and Deliberation: for they do not consider the great Aggravations and Guiltiness of such industrious Wickedness. They most of all engage their dint of Brain, and Malice
of

of Will, and Application of Agents and Instruments : but it may be with them, as it was with the wicked *Nero*, after he had killed his own Mother, *Perfecto demum Scelere Magnitudo ejus intellecta est*; When he had accomplish'd that horrid Wickedness, he was then exquisitely sensible, by the Torture of Conscience, of the Greatness of his Guilt. When Conscience views Sin in its full Dimensions, and *consummate Malignity*, it is agast and confounded at it.

Tacit.
Ann.
l. 14.
c. 10.

But let us be careful, that we be not more inexcusable, than the Crucifiers of our LORD, by our finning and acting against Knowledge, against Conscience, with premeditate and resolved Malice. Designs managed with perverse Will, with vindictive Rancour, and Assiduity of Application, are not the blind, casual Issues of pitiable Ignorance.

Let none persist in an evil Course, nor go on in an evil way with *Balaam*, though an Angel meet and rebuke them; nor give mischievous Counsel (with him) against the People of the LORD. Let us not sin with open Eyes, like that Wizard in his extatic Trances; and in Opposition to the Will of GOD revealed to him. We may urge it for a
favour-

favourable Plea for Forgiveness, when we sin ignorantly, and by Infirmary or Surprize: but the Motive of Forgiveness, which our Blessed Saviour pleads, may not belong to those, who sin of malicious and deliberate Wickedness. Whose Crimes are *ἁλὰ τὴν γνώμην*, of Malice prepenſe, and perverse Temper.

5. A Fifth Doctrinal Proposition is, That it will be an eminent Act of Charity and Piety to Forgive, and pray for the Forgiveness even of ſuch. Though our Enemies ſhould know the Iniquity of their Actings, and not be able to plead Ignorance, but reſolutely proceed in an injurious Courſe; yet let us pray even for them, as our *Lord* and our *Liturgy* inſtruct us. It will be a bleſſed Temper of Soul, if our Charity can ſurmount all Injuries, and yield thoſe the Benefit of our charitable Interceſſions, who deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us. This many *Martyrs* and holy Saints have done.

The Favour of GOD can diſſipate all the Counſels of our Enemies againſt us, and utterly defeat them; and ſuch excellent Charity will be a prevailing Motive to engage Him on our ſide. And *then who can harm us?* He can diſſolve the Enmity of exulcerated

rated Minds into Peace, Tears and mutual Endearments, as in the Interview of the Two Brethren, *Esau* and *Jacob*.

Gen. 33.
4.

It is a Solace to some perverse and un sanctified Tempers to think, that others will damn themselves by their Injustice and Oppression of them. This is a Stricture of infernal Malice, and a wretched Satisfaction of impotent, inconsiderate Minds. But the Enemies of a good Man enlarge his *Litany*, and they have an Interest in his Charitable Prayers. The Writer of the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hammond's* Life attesteth this of him: 'Who had few Enemies, but Those ' had a Share in his private Devotions and Intercessions. However Gospel-Pastors be treated, yet they are ready to dispense the Pledges of *Christ's* dying Love, and to make private and publick Intercession for their Adversaries.

And certainly those Enemies know not what they do, who sin against Those, who publickly minister to them in holy Things, and in Secret pray for their Forgiveness, as in Duty and Charity they are bound.

Let us make the Experiment of being Superiour to our Enemies, by praying for their
For-

Forgiveness. It is the exprefs Injunction of our *Lord*, and his venerable Practice; and we may depend upon the good Effect of thus *Overcoming evil with good*.

Rom.
12. 21.

It is a Pitch of *Heroical* Charity to Forgive our greatest Enemies, and to pray fervently for their Forgiveness at the Throne of Grace. He will least suffer from his Enemies, who can heartily pray for them and their Forgiveness, G O D will skreen and protect those, who can act to such an Height of Charity and Piety, highly agreeable to his own blessed Nature.

What Effect our *Saviour's* Intercession might have on the promiscuous Authors and Spectators of his Crucifixion, we know not. Many of those who were present at that prodigious Scene, and Spectators of his divine Grace and Piety, might be converted; as the *Centurion*, who cried out, *Truly this was the Son of God; Certainly this was a righteous man*. And we read of many, who *smote their breasts and departed*. And such Compunction might give the first Rise to their Conversion.

Matt.
22. 54.
Luke
23. 47.

And when afterward they might see the Cause of Christ approv'd by G O D, by the credible Reports of his Resurrection, and
by

by the Miracles, Sanctity, and Wisdom of his Disciples, they might come to a serious Detestation of their Guilt, and find the Relief of our *Lord's* Intercession. The dying Petition of our *Saviour* was not without its Efficacy, but might be happily instrumental to the Conversion of many. As the dying Intercession of St. *Stephen* is thought to have had some Moment toward the Conversion of St. *Paul*, and, by his Mission, of many Thousands: So this most gracious Intercession of Christ was not without its Triumphs of Salvation.

And it will be an acceptable and fragrant Devotion in us, and will avail, either to convert our Enemies, or defeat their Malice, and secure GOD's Favour and Protection to us. Probably we may not use a more successful Engine and Stratagem against our Enemies, than to Forgive them from our Hearts, and to pray sincerely for their Forgiveness at GOD's Hand.

Let so much suffice of the *Doctrinal Propositions*; which may be easily review'd: I shall now proceed in the Second place,

II. To make some practical Uses.

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I. Let

1 Sam.
12. 23.

Let us imitate the excellent Perfection of our Blessed Saviour, who pray'd for the Forgiveness of his Crucifiers, and could admit those his Enemies through his Wounds into his Heart. God forbid (said Samuel to his ungrateful Country-men) *that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you.* The Indignities and Injuries of the World should not exceed our Charity, nor the Intercession of our Lord be thought too high a pitch for our pious Imitation.

Prov.
16. 7.

There would be less of Enmity in the World, if there were more of fervent Prayer and Intercession for Enemies. Happy are They, who overcome their Enemies in their Closets, and vanquish them *on their Knees*, by praying for them, by an indiscernible and ghostly Energy. It is the Wise Man's Assurance, *When a Man's Ways please the Lord, he will make even his Enemies to be at Peace with him*; and our Ways will please God, when we act by the highest Charity.

We who often meditate upon *Christ Crucified*, should think of this his dying Speech and Intercession: and think that Devotion highly imitable and acceptable, which he hath commended to us by his holy Doctrine, and

and by his Living and Dying Example. Accordingly St. James, Apostle and Bishop of Jerusalem, when he was thrown down from a high Battlement by the Jews, and was near to Death, cry'd out, *Lord, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

2. We may be perswaded, what a gracious *Intercessor* Christ will be in Heaven, for penitent and believing Souls, who under his bitter Torments, and Provocations of an ungrateful People, yet made this most pathetic and gracious Intercession. Intercession in Heaven is his Prerogative and Office: and He, who used it thus graciously on his painful Cross, will not restrain it on his celestial Throne. It will still have the Virtue of his most meritorious Sufferings, and the Tenderness of his dying Love.

The Apostolical Writings assure us, *That he maketh Intercession for us, that he ever liveth to make Intercession for us;* and his Merits and Power will make his Intercession effectual and prevailing. It is to the exceeding Benefit of Christians, that they have such a merciful Intercessor at the right Hand of God, who pray'd for the promiscuous Multitude of his Crucifiers, and not without a blessed and salutary Effect. O

Rom.
8. 34.
Heb.
7. 5.

O that Christians were as ready and willing to Repent and Forgive, and to pray for the Forgiveness of Enemies, as *Christ* is to intercede for us, and them!

3. How cordially and fervently should we love our *Friends*, seeing, after the Example of our *Saviour*, we should pray, and intercede for our *Enemies*! Our Love should be *without Dissimulation* to our pious Friends; we should love them with a pure Mind fervently, and devoutly commend their State to the Throne of Grace; seeing our bitterest Enemies should have a Share in our Prayers, and an Interest in our private Devotions. Thus *Jacob* gave his paternal Blessing to all his Sons, but to *Joseph* with an Exuberance of Affection and Benediction.

This may be one of the highest, and most precious Acts of Friendship: and Friends would stand firmer in the Favour of God, and obtain peculiar Blessings from Heaven, as is evident in the Example of *Daniel, and his three Companions*; if they did make a pious Association, and *Compact of Prayers*, and spiritual Solicitude for each others Good. Which may be a very happy, and successful Exercise and Pledge of religious Friendship. The

The Friend, that is as our Soul, cannot but be in our *Orisons*, and be presented to GOD in the Devotions of our Souls.

4. We should dread to act with *Jewish* Infatuation, who knew not what they did in Crucifying the *Lord of Glory*; and exerted their greatest Cruelty on the greatest Lover of Mankind, and the *Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him*. The *Athenians* in condemning *Socrates* to Death, and *Aristides* to Banishment, knew not what they did.

Heb.
5. 9.

And when Men prosecute their Patriots, their Benefactors, their Pastors, (whom their *Catechism*, and the genuine Expositions of the Fifth Commandment, declare to be their *Spiritual Fathers*) when they malign and injure their Friends, and those who have deserved well of them; this looks like a Degree of *Jewish Infatuation*: and it may be truly said of Such, *They know not what they do*. They know not against how great Charity, Piety and Obligations they offend!

5. We should seriously think of that *final Judgment*, that tremendous Appearance, when we shall all stand in need of Forgiveness; and without it not be able to stand before

fore the Son of Man. We shall desire to hear this ravishing Speech then, *Son, or Daughter, thy Sins are forgiven thee.* But what Promise or Assurance of such Forgiveness, without our Forgiving the Offences and Trespases of Others against us; and wishing and praying for Forgiveness to each other? This *Christ* hath made a necessary Ingredient and Article of our daily Prayers and Devotions.

Our dying *Saviour* instructs us what will best prepare us for Death and Judgment. His dying Speeches are instructive and *lively Oracles*; and the Virtues and Graces, which appear'd in his Death, will best qualify us for our Dissolution. If the Injustice and Obliquity of our Actions, and the Perverseness of our Designs be such, that it may be said of us, *We know not what we do*; How shall we make Apology for such Unrighteousness at the dreadful Tribunal? What we transact out of blind Passion, out of malicious Revenge, and wicked Temper, and implacable Hatred, will not be easily accountable for at that time.

Mutual Forgiveness and Charity, and pacific Counsels, and Forbearing one another in Love, will more turn to our Account; and
con-

conciliate our Judge, than Hatred and Variance, and Success in shrewd Turns, and the employing our Power or Interest to ill Purposes. One *imaginary*, or *real* Injury forgiven, at that Day will more plead for us, than Ten reveng'd with a luscious Satisfaction. Scarce any thing doth St. *Chrysostom* more frequently inveigh against, and dissuade from, than *the Remembrance and Retaliation of Displeasure.*

Lastly, Whatsoever our Injuries and Provocations shall be; whatsoever the Success and Malice of Adversaries; whatsoever their Machinations or Advantages shall be against us; though by the Divine Permission, and for the Chastisement of our Sins they should compass, and rejoyce in our Abasement: Yet let us possess our Souls in Patience and Charity, and with our Blessed *Lord* intercede for our Enemies.

They know not what they do; neither know they what good Issue *God* may decree to his injur'd Servants. *This we know, that all things shall work together for the good of them, who love God, and confide in Him.* And happy is the Man, who hath *God* for his Help, and Hope! and *Christ* for his Example;

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8. 28.

ample; and particularly in Praying for the Forgiveness of Enemies!

May our Blessed LORD, who hath given us such an excellent Example, and proposed to our Imitation such a gracious Perfection, give us his efficacious Grace and good Spirit, that we may (as we shall have frequent Occasions) sincerely, obediently and chearfully practise it!

I conclude this Discourse with a Prayer of St. Basil's, as I find it translated into our Language in the practical Catechism of Dr. Hammond, Book II.

*'O Long-suffering and eternal King, that
'for the Condemnation that came by the Tree,
'wert lifted up on the Tree (and taken from
'the Earth by that shameful Death) and hast
'shewed forth thy self to All, that chuse to
'follow thy Steps and Pattern, and Copy of
'Long-sufferance and Patience, that offeredst
'up thy Intercession to thy Co-eternal Father,
'for those very Fighters against God, which
'crucified Thee: Do Thou, O Lord, Thou the
'same Lover of Mankind, afford thy Mercy
'and Pardon to All that are Enemies to Us,
'which either by Treachery or Reproach, or
'Con-*

' Contumely and Envy, or by any other Means,
 ' through the Treachery or Calumny of the
 ' Devil, that Lover of Hatred, have express'd
 ' their Malice or Madness against Us: Change
 ' their Councils, from that mischievous, to a
 ' sweet Christian Temper of Gentleness; in-
 ' fuse into their Hearts sincere unfeigned Love;
 ' bind them fast to us in the inviolable Bonds
 ' of spiritual Friendship; and by what means
 ' thou knowest most fit, make them Partakers
 ' of thy pure Life. As for those that love us,
 ' or for thy holy Names sake do administer to
 ' our bodily Necessities, repay them with the
 ' Riches and Abundance of thy Gifts, and
 ' vouchsafe them the Lot and Portion of faith-
 ' ful and wise Stewards: and for those, that
 ' out of good Affection have remembered our
 ' Infirmities, or have prayed for us, reward
 ' them with thy plenteous Grace. To those,
 ' that have commanded us miserable un-
 ' worthy Creatures to pray for them, grant
 ' those things that are profitable for them;
 ' and yield them those Requests of theirs
 ' which tend to their Salvation, and send
 ' them, from thy holy place, thy rich Mercies
 ' and Bowels of Compassion. And, O thou
 ' Father of Compassion, pity all those that
 E trust

' *trust in Thee, draw us to the Divine Love*
 ' *of Thee: be Thou president in all things,*
 ' *and assistant to all, together with us thy*
 ' *sinful and unprofitable Servants, and make*
 ' *us all Heirs of thy Kingdom: for to Thee*
 ' *it belongs to shew Mercy, and to save us,*
 ' *O our God, for thine is the Power for ever.*
 ' *Amen.*

To which Eternal Majesty, Father, Son
 and Holy-Ghost be all Honour and Glory,
 Adoration and Thanksgiving now and
 for ever. *Amen.*



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